

West Virginia Influenza Summary, Week Ending February 16, 2013 (MMWR Week 7)

Dear Influenza Partners,

West Virginia has reported influenza activity as “**Regional**” for MMWR week 7 (week ending Saturday February 16, 2013).

An overall downward trend in influenza activity has been observed over the past several weeks. The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) decreased this week from 5.9% at the peak of the season to 1.4%. Although influenza activity has decreased across West Virginia as a whole, the number of respiratory specimens testing positive for Influenza B has nearly doubled from the previous week. Influenza B doesn’t often dominate during flu seasons, and mortality in seasons involving the strain are typically less severe than Influenza A strains. In past seasons (2005-06) we have seen an increase in influenza B towards the end of the season, and this year we are seeing the same thing. Influenza B tends to be written off as more mild than A, but in some folks, especially children, it can be as bad as or worse than A.

Influenza activity is declining nationally, however some areas the activity level remains high. The proportion of outpatient visits for ILI was 3.2%; this is above that national baseline of 2.2%. This season has been severe for people 65 years of age and older with key indicators showing many hospitalizations and deaths for that age group.

Weekly influenza surveillance graphs for West Virginia can be found at the website: <http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/flu/Pages/fluSurveillance.aspx>. Because of late reporting, we must sometimes update information in retrospect. The website will always have the most up-to-date numbers. Please feel free to contact us at (304)-558-5358, extension 1, with any questions regarding this report.